

NEVADA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION NEWSLETTER

Issue 3

November 2000

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Why are Modern
Roundabouts Being
Considered in Nevada
County?

Upcoming NCTC Meeting

A meeting will not be held during the month of November.

The next meeting of the Nevada County Transportation Commission will be held **Wednesday, December 20th at 9:30 A.M.**, in the **Grass Valley City Council Chambers, 125 East Main Street, Grass Valley, California.**

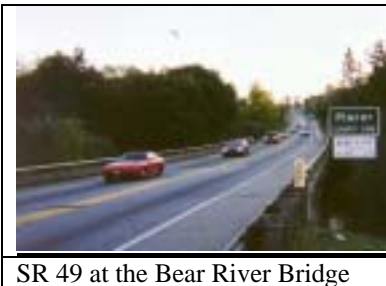
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Public Comments Help Expedite Construction of the SR 49 Widening Project from Bear River to the Wolf & Combie Road Intersection.



SR 49 at the Bear River Bridge

The Nevada County Transportation Commission was pleased with the public workshop held on September 14th and very much appreciates Caltrans efforts to keep the community informed of the progress of the project to widen SR 49 and to address the citizens questions and concerns.

In response to comments made at the public workshop, the Nevada County Transportation Commission sent a letter

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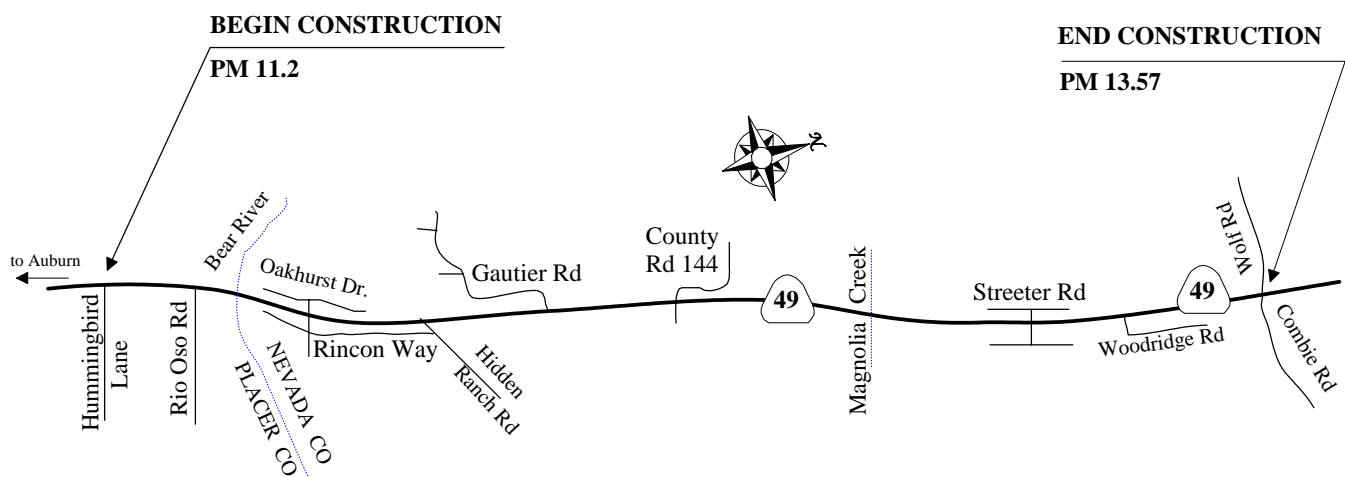
to Caltrans asking if it was possible to start to construction earlier than fall of 2002 and invited the Caltrans project manager to address this issue at the October NCTC meeting.

Doug Hobbs, Caltrans Project Manager, for the SR 49 widening project, accepted the invitation to address this issue at the October Commission meeting. Mr. Hobbs informed the Commission that he had looked into this suggestion and had received commitments from the various Caltrans departments involved to begin the construction in July of 2002.



SR 49 at the Wolf/Combie Rd.
Intersection

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STATE ROUTE 49 WIDENING PROJECT

(SR 49 Widening Continued)

Mr. Hobbs stated that he will also continue to work on this issue and try to see if he could arrange to have the construction begin as early as May of 2002, but does not have commitments for May secured at this time.

By starting construction in May, it would ensure that bridge construction in the Bear River would be completed during the 2002 construction season and would hasten the opening of the project.



Evening Commute Traffic on SR 49 Near Gautier Rd.

The NCTC has requested Caltrans employ every resource available to accomplish the May 2002 construction date goal. It is the desire of NCTC to have SR 49 widened as soon as possible to relieve existing traffic congestion.

Why are Modern Roundabouts Being Considered in Nevada County?

The term modern roundabout is used in the United States to differentiate it from the nonconforming traffic circles or rotaries that have been used for many years, primarily in the Northeast.

Modern roundabouts are designed to control traffic flow at intersections without the use of stop signs or traffic signals. Roundabouts can provide operational improvements in locations where the space available for storing traffic is limited. Roads are often widened to create storage for vehicles waiting at red lights, but the reduced delays and continuous flows at roundabouts allow the use of fewer lanes between intersections.

By reducing delays and allowing continuous flow, the modern roundabout allows for increased capacity versus stop signs or traffic signals. Studies have shown that delays in traffic can often be reduced by as much as 75 percent at intersections where roundabouts replace traffic signals or stop signs. This reduction in delay associated with roundabouts also provides air quality benefits by reducing the amount of emissions from idling motor vehicles.

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The primary characteristics of the modern roundabout reduce many of the safety hazards of traditional intersections and nonconforming traffic circles. The physical configuration of a modern roundabout, with a deflected entry and yield-at-entry, forces a driver to reduce speed during approach, entry, and movement within the roundabout.

Another important safety factor is that the only movement at an entry and an exit of a roundabout is a right turn, thus reducing the potential frequency and severity of accidents compared to accidents typically occurring during left turns and when traffic crosses an intersection in perpendicular directions.

A study conducted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety analyzed crashes and injuries at 24 intersections before and after the construction of roundabouts. The study found a 39 percent overall decrease in crashes and a 76 percent decrease in injury-producing crashes. Collisions involving fatal or incapacitating injuries fell as much as 90 percent.

There are currently two modern roundabouts located and operating in

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Roundabout located at Sierra College Dr./Robert Ross Wy./Litton Loop

(Roundabouts Continued)

Nevada County. In western Nevada County a modern roundabout can be found at the intersection of Sierra College Drive, Robert Ross Way, and the Litton Loop. The Town of Truckee has a roundabout located near the East Bound I-80 Central Truckee off ramp at the intersection of Donner Pass Road and McIver's Crossing.



Roundabout Located in Truckee

Truckee's modern roundabout recently showed its ability to handle high volumes of traffic during the closure of the SR 267 UP Railroad Crossing. During the closure, traffic moved through the roundabout at a volume of approximately 2,300 vehicles per hour during the afternoon peak hour traffic, according to Truckee Town Engineer, Dan Wilkins.

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Roundabouts are under consideration at the following locations:

- McKnight Way Interchange
- Mill St. /McCourtney Rd.
- Mill St./SR 20 WB ramp intersection.



Mill St./McCourtney Rd./Freeman Ln./Allison Ranch Rd. Intersection

Tips for Safely Navigating Roundabouts

- Remember that traffic in the roundabout always has the right of way.
- All turns into and out of the roundabout will be right turns.
- Prevailing speed in the roundabout is slow – about 20 mph, but should be constant. Traffic in the roundabout should never stop – only the vehicles waiting for a chance to enter.
- Take care in icy weather, and maintain a slow constant speed.



Conceptual drawing of the Mill St. Roundabouts



Mill St. at the West Bound SR 20 onramp is one of the locations where a roundabout is under consideration.

Nevada County Transportation Commission

The Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency for Nevada County. NCTC coordinates State and Federal transportation programs for Nevada County, the Cities of Grass Valley, Nevada City, and the Town of Truckee.

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The Nevada County Transportation Commission Newsletter is published bimonthly. Interested persons and agencies can be added to the mailing list by writing or calling the Nevada County Transportation Commission office.

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